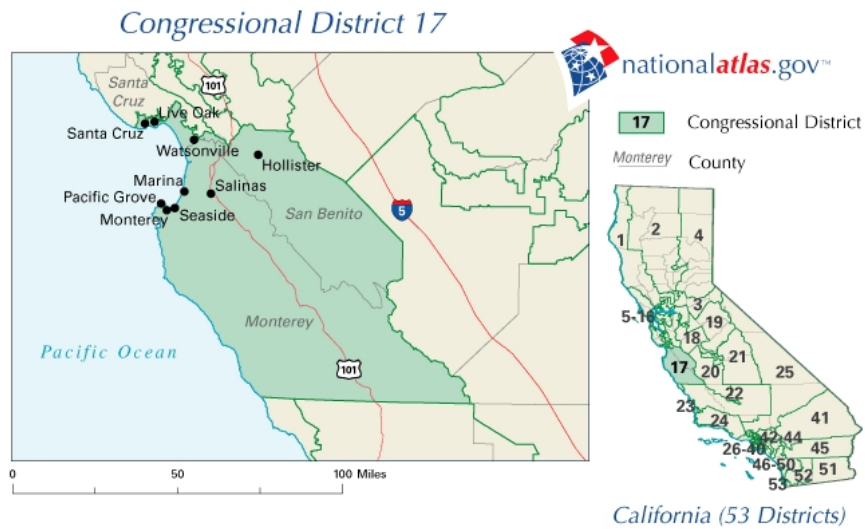


About the 17th District of California

The California coast around Monterey Bay is for many a working definition of paradise. This is where California's government began; where Spanish and then Mexicans governed a virtually empty land sparsely settled by Natives known as Esalens, Coastenoans, and Ohlones, and where Californians held their Constitutional Convention in Monterey. The regions leading economies still make a fine living off the land and sea, as they have for 150 years. Salinas is the county seat, where John Steinbeck lived and described the physical and human lifestyle in his novels, such as *Grapes of Wrath* and *Cannery Row*. What he called, "the valley of the sun" is the fertile Salinas Valley growing over 85 specialty crops and grossing almost \$3 billion in sales. The fields around Salinas supply much of the nation's lettuce and cauliflower. Nearby, the fields around Castroville supply almost all of the nation's artichokes, and the vast greenhouses around Watsonville supply a goodly portion of its cut flowers. The fishing fleet, and 18 now-closed canneries of Monterey, was the world's largest sardine port. Now they have generated a new industry: Cannery Row is refurbished with upscale shops and hotels, and the magnificent Monterey Bay Aquarium is one of California's top tourist destinations. Monterey Bay has become the nation's language learning capital, with the Defense Language Institute, the AT&T Language Line, the Monterey Institute of International Studies and Cal State's Monterey Bay Center for Intensive Language and Culture. There are other attractions on the Monterey peninsula: the Pebble Beach golf courses, 17 Mile Drive, and Carmel, whose restrictive laws--no house numbers, no live entertainment, no stop lights, no cutting trees without city council permission--reflect an effort to maintain the atmosphere of 100 years ago, when it really was an artists' colony.

The 17th Congressional District includes the entire coast of Monterey County and the coast of Santa Cruz County with its world famous University of California Santa Cruz. Also located in Santa Cruz County is the last boardwalk amusement park on the West coast, as well as California's first state park, Big Basin Redwoods State Park. The district extends inland, into sunny valleys sheltered from ocean mists, and covers some of the nation's richest farmland. Hollister is the county seat for San Benito County, where tens of thousands of motorcyclists assemble annually at an oval dirt racetrack for the Independence Rally to remember Marlon Brando's movie *The Wild One*.

This was drawn from National Journal's Almanac of American Politics.



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